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TRPI

The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute

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Remittances from Mexican Immigrant Communities in the U.S.: How Are They Perceived in Mexico?

Los Angeles: A major survey released by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) today gauged Mexican attitudes on the impact of remittances sent by their co-nationals living in the U.S. Remittances are defined as monies earned and sent back to family or other organizations. The TRPI study revealed how positively these remittances from the U.S. to Mexico are perceived. In this groundbreaking study, a nationally representative sample (N = 1000, error margin +/-3.1%) of Mexican nationals were interviewed to determine the impact of immigrant remittances.

Findings:

- Remittances are part of the fabric of everyday life for many families in Mexico: 32% of the respondents have received one to two remittances in the past year; 35% have received three to five remittances; and 33% have received six or more.
- In the past, Mexican immigrants were sending remittances to family members on a person to person basis. Responses from the study show a trend toward remittance money benefiting beyond familial support. Remittances include support for economic, social and health programs as well as funding for economic development and non-governmental organizations.
- Around one-third of respondents are aware of groups and programs working to extend the productive impact of remittances. 34% indicate some awareness of U.S. based immigrant and Mexican hometown associations that send money back to communities.
- Concerns surrounding the remittance industry are evolving. 51% of respondents said that the most important factor when receiving money from the U.S. is that it arrives securely. For 17%, the most important factor is that the monies arrive on time while 16% stated that collecting the money easily was a factor. 13% cited the cost of the transaction and only 4% mentioned the exchange rate.
- 95% said that there are more choices now than five years ago regarding the number of companies available to receive a remittance.

“Mexicans in remittance receiving communities recognize the value of monies sent by their co-nationals in the U.S. in improving the qualities of Mexican life,” said Rudy de La Garza, Ph.D., Vice-President of research for TRPI.

The World Bank estimates that over 24 billion dollars are received by Mexico, accounting for 3% of the country's GDP.

“The amount of monies these remittances represent is enormous,” said Harry P. Pachon, President of TRPI. “For most countries in Latin America, remittances exceed U.S. foreign aid.”

The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute is a nonprofit, independent institution founded in 1985 specialized in the key issues that affect the Latino community, including education, political participation, access to healthcare, economic well-being, mass media, and immigration. The Institute is affiliated with the School of Policy, Planning and Development at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles – with an office at Columbia University in New York.

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